

THE SOUTHEASTERN GAY CONFERENCE

February 1977

It's been a few months since the conference, but even looking back at it now I'm still a little flabbergasted by it all. Last November, when the Carolina Gay Association began planning the conference, a few of our more skeptical and less idealistic members predicted failure. But they were wrong. The weekend of April 2-4 was a surprising success — the communications that were established, the enthusiasm generated, and the friendships born will be with us for many years.

This booklet contains items of special interest from the conference. In addition to highlights from Dr. Kameny's keynote address, there are summaries and comments about many of the Saturday sessions. A list of gay organizations is also included. It is far from complete, but it is probably the most accurate compilation currently available. Any additions to this list of organizations, as well as bars, etc., will be greatly appreciated. Space limitations prevented us from listing all the conference participants, but if you'd like someone's address, just write us.

The Southeastern Gay Conference provided an opportunity to learn about ourselves and to further the struggle for our rights. Now that a little momentum has been established in the Southeast, it is up to you to keep the ball rolling. Don't make the drastic mistake of falling into the rut of apathetic complacency. Make your politicians realize that we have ten per cent of the vote and that we're not going to be stepped on and ignored any longer. Work for the rights we deserve — if we don't do it, no one else will.

In response to a number of inquiries, yes Virginia (and Georgia, Maryland, Florida, and all the others), there will be another conference this year. It's slated for the weekend of April 1-3! Enclosed with this booklet is the tentative program and workshop list. Please let us know if there are any other topic areas or activities you'd like to see included. Also let us know if you'd like to lead or help lead one of the workshops, or if you know of someone we could contact who is qualified to lead one of the workshops. Send in your suggestions now!

See you this coming April!

Sincerely,
Tom Carr
Conference coordinator

P.S. Let me personally apologize for the delay in getting this booklet out. Once again, working on a master's degree has interfered with gay activism!

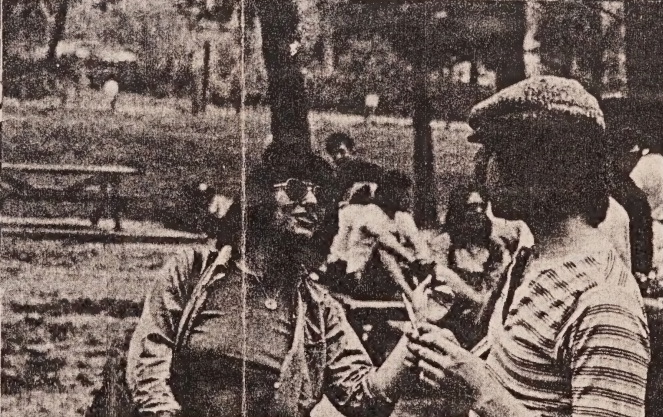
✓

During one of those cases, in early '72. . .the government in one of its briefs, and their lawyer, a rather tenth-rate Justice Department lawyer. . . said that the Civil Service Commission was revising their policy and expected to have it out within ninety days. . . So I wrote the Chairman of the Civil Service Commission and said: No you don't! Not so fast! You do not, consistent with basic American principles, promulgate a policy which affects large numbers of people without receiving input from those people. I want a meeting with you and I'm writing to arrange it so you can get input from the gay community! There was a long delay, about two or three months, and then I got a letter, not from the Chairman, but from an underling, a very high level underling let it be said but an underling, trying to postpone, dilatory tactics, asking for a statement from us (I pointed out that we had turned in such a statement back in 1965 and nothing had been done about it and so on.). . .

So I wrote back to the Chairman of the Commission and pointed out two things: I said first: I wrote you personally. I said this is an important issue. We consider it important. You apparently consider it important since you squander numbers of millions of dollars a year trying to get rid of us. When I write to the Chairman of my Civil Service Commission, I expect an answer from the Chairman of my Civil Service Commission, and nobody else. Letters received from anybody else will be returned. Thereafter I got letters directly from the Chairman.

I pointed out secondly that there had been an awfully long wait for that response, that the government gives the citizen all kinds of deadlines. . . that the government exists for my convenience, I don't exist for theirs, that hereafter I was going to set deadlines on them and I expected them to be met. And usually I set the same deadline: there is nothing. . .which ought to take more than 30 days. . .And so I put deadlines on each of my letters and the Chairman met them. Usually the last day, but he met every deadline!

The correspondence continued and the file thickened, and along about June of that year I got a letter from him which said, in partial direct quote and in partial paraphrase: The meeting that you are requesting would serve no useful purpose because I really don't understand our policies on this matter well enough to discuss them intelligently. So I wrote back and I said: This is the most obscene letter I have ever received in my life! Here you are destroying peoples' lives, ruining their careers, creating untold human havoc and misery, all in the name of a policy you don't even understand well enough to talk about intelligently. The least you can do in common decency and the morality which you accuse us of violating is to call a moratorium on all further such disqualifications until you've done your homework.



Then I pointed out to him that if he would read my letters with care, he would note that I was not writing to *request* a meeting, I was writing to *arrange* a meeting, that I was writing to arrange the meeting bilaterally at a time of mutual convenience, but that if he didn't start arranging promptly, the meeting was going to be arranged unilaterally, at our convenience, in his office. He had thirty days in which to respond! . . .

The new policy came out, finally, last July and represented essentially the winning of the war; the Civil Service Commission issued its surrender document in the form of a news release after 18 years! . . . That battle is over. There are others being pursued.

. . . There's an old and honorable and not unreasonable legal precept that if an act is illegal, an effort, an invitation, or proposal to commit the act is illegal. . . so on that basis I sent letters to our three top law-enforcement officials in the District of Columbia. . . suggesting, proposing, inviting, soliciting, urging, each of them to engage with me in an act of sodomy of his choice, in the role or roles of his choice, in some indisputably private place in the District of Columbia, and said: try it, you'll like it. And then pointed out that the delivery of these letters consummated a crime — I set out the whole legal theory — and demanded to be arrested. . . I'm still waiting. . . (Police) Chief Wilson had a sense of humor and wrote back and said that he couldn't accept my invitation because his wife would never stand for it. I find it interesting that a Chief of Police should refuse an invitation to engage in a felony or to commit a felony not because it's a felony, which is sufficient reason quite unto itself, but by pleading a conflict of interest. . .

I think what we will see in the next two to five years or so is something that's obviously well under way. . . a mass emergence of gays from the closet.

. . . As gay rights bills get passed in increasing numbers, they will help enormously. . . For a lot of people, (employment) is the major factor. . . and when people begin to feel, not just perceive at the intellectual level, but feel at the gut level, that — you know, if my employer finds out I'm gay, he can't fire me. If he tries to fire me, *he'll* go to jail. . . and I'll keep my job — that's when you're going to see gay people start to come out.

. . . But that needs to be helped out. These things don't happen all by themselves. All these things. . . haven't happened by people sitting back and waiting for them to happen. They have happened because people got out and got them done. . . You have to make them happen. *You* have to do them. And I say to this audience here, go back and start doing them! We all know, everyone here I think, that

The first project of NCGU was the organization of a contingent to march in Atlanta's highly successful Gay Pride Parade on June 26. The next major undertaking will be a polling of all candidates for state and federal offices in NC as to their stands on issues of interest to gays.

JOIN US! Membership dues are \$10/yr. for organizations and \$5/yr. for individuals. Dues-paying members or groups will receive newsletters, be entitled to a reduced registration fee at semi-annual meetings, and be entitled to vote at quarterly and general meetings. For more information, write to N.C.G.U., P.O. Box 1147, Chapel Hill, NC, 27514.

Gay Directory, continued from page 3

MARYLAND

Gay Students Alliance
Stud. Union Bldg. U of M
College Park, MD 20742

Lesbian Community Center
3028 Greenmount Ave.
Baltimore, MD 21218

Baltimore Gay Alliance
Box 13438
Baltimore, MD 21203

LOUISIANA

Tulane Univ. Gay Students
Assoc. Student Body,
University Center
New Orleans, LA 70118

Dignity of New Orleans
Box 50723
New Orleans, LA 70150

MCC
1934 Burgundy
New Orleans, LA 70117

MISSISSIPPI

Mississippi Gay Alliance
P.O. Box 4470, Miss. St. Col.
State College, MS 39762

Mississippi Gay Alliance/
Mississippi Lesbians
Box 8342
Jackson, MS 39204

TENNESSEE

Pat Strange—Knoxville Gay
Caucus
532 Tipton Ave. SE
Knoxville, TN 37902

Gay Switchboard
Box 3620
Memphis, TN 38103

